

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1) An apparatus for connecting a transmission line that terminates with a connector to a device, comprising:
 - (a) a receptacle for receiving the connector; and
 - (b) a sensor associated with the receptacle for detecting the presence of the connector within the receptacle.
- 2) The apparatus of **claim 1**, wherein the sensor comprises a pressure switch within the receptacle.
- 3) The apparatus of **claim 1**, wherein the sensor comprises an optical sensor within the receptacle.
- 4) The apparatus of **claim 1**, further comprising a signal detector for detecting signals communicated through the transmission line.
- 5) The apparatus of **claim 4**, wherein the signal detector is for detecting a telephone dial tone.
- 6) The apparatus of **claim 4**, wherein, in response to a signal from the sensor indicating that the connector is present within the receptacle, a determination is made, with the signal detector, whether signals are being communicated through the transmission line.

7) The transmission line connection apparatus of **claim 4**, wherein, in response to a failure by the signal detector to detect signals through the transmission line, a determination is made, with the sensor, whether the connector is present within the receptacle.

8) The apparatus of **claim 1**, wherein the sensor is utilized to determine whether the connector is present within the receptacle when the device is activated.

9) The transmission line connection of **claim 4**, wherein the signal detector is utilized to detect signals through the transmission line at times other than on device activation.

10) A printing machine capable of communicating through a transmission line that terminates with a connector, comprising:

- (a) a receptacle for receiving the connector;
- (b) a sensor associated with the receptacle for detecting the presence of the connector within the receptacle; and
- (c) a sensor circuit, communicating with the detecting sensor, for transmitting a signal indicating whether the detecting sensor detects the presence of the connector.

11) A method of communicating through a transmission line that terminates with a connector, adapted to be received in a receptacle, comprising:

- (a) determining whether the connector is present within the receptacle; and
- (b) determining whether a signal is being communicated through the transmission line.

12) The method of **claim 11**, wherein the step of determining whether the connector is present within the receptacle occurs before the step of determining whether a signal is being communicated through the transmission line.

13) The method of **claim 12**, further comprising the step of initiating activation of a device prior to the step of determining whether the connection is present within the receptacle.

14) The method of **claim 12**, further comprising, in response to determining that the connector is not present within the receptacle, requiring the operator to intervene in order for further operations to occur.

15) The method of **claim 12**, further comprising, in response to determining that a signal is not being communicated through the transmission line, placing a device in a condition that is ready to perform further operations.

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- 16) The method of **claim 11**, wherein the step of determining whether a signal is being communicated through the transmission line occurs before determining whether the connector is present within the receptacle.
 - 17) The method of **claim 16**, wherein, in response to determining that a signal is not being communicated through the transmission line, determining whether the connector is present within the receptacle.
 - 18) The method of **claim 16** further comprising the step of initiating the step of determining whether a signal is being communicated through the transmission line at times other than activation of a device.
 - 19) The method **claim 16**, further comprising, in response to determining that the connector is present within the receptacle, delaying processing of the operation currently being performed by the device when the current operation requires use of the transmission line.
 - 20) The method of **claim 16**, further comprising, in response to determining that the plug connector is not present within the receptacle, aborting processing of the operation currently being performed by the device when such operation requires use of the transmission line.